

Wichita Daily Eagle

A RARE OLD HOUSE.

The Benson Homestead at Bensonhurst, Long Island.

[Special Correspondence.]

BROOKLYN, Sept. 22.—The Benson homestead at Bensonhurst is one of the historical places on Long Island.

Here have lived several generations of Bensons. Robert Benson, the last of his race, dying at the old home about five years ago. The house is now owned by Mr. W. E. Parfitt, of Brooklyn, and occupied by him as a summer home.

One Harry Benson, over a century ago, played a prominent part in many of the conflicts with his country's foe, and his daring won for him the title of Fighting Harry.

This same Fighting Harry was one of the brave boys who, in their endeavor to prevent the British from ascending the Hudson, stretched a huge chain of iron across the river in hopes of so impeding progress.

It is a singular fact that a house so long occupied should have had but one bride to go forth from its doors, and that but in recent years. The wedding of Miss Margaret Benson was the only one in whose honor the house has been made gay in all these generations. Yet it has been the scene of many gala days, when men of renown have gathered beneath its roof. Daniel Webster and Henry Clay have at various times partaken of the steaming products of its old Dutch oven, and the story is told that shortly after his inauguration as president of the United States Washington was entertained at a grand dinner given in his honor by Mr. Benson.



BENSONHURST.

after which they went to the public hall, where the children of the village had gathered to see the illustrious visitor. The little ones were drawn up in line, each arrayed in the cleanest of frocks and pinafores.

During the inspection Washington placed his hand upon the head of one of the boys, Rem Van Velt by name, and bade him be "a good, industrious youth."

It was in this house that Mrs. Martha Lamb spent much of her time while engaged upon the "History of New York."

Over the front door, through which guests were wont to enter, there used to hang an old greeting upon a ground of blue, bearing the Dutch motto "Welkom," and those who passed beneath it had no occasion, it is said, to ever doubt the principle for which it stood.

In the house there still remain two massive mahogany tables and two ancient chests of drawers of the same wood. These were brought from Holland.

On the landing of the stairway there hangs an old picture, upon which is the name "Dominus Michaelis Vander Borch, 1708," and again there are two old prints in colors, one of New York, looking from Brooklyn Heights, and the other the same from New Jersey. No date is given, but New York is shown as a very small settlement.

Two other marks of antiquity are shown. In this house—the chains in the cellar, used for punishing refractory slaves, and the old millstone in the back yard. It is half hidden by the overgrowing grass and weeds, smooth by the treading of many feet. It is supposed to be the first millstone ever brought to this country.

In the natural course of things most of the furniture which once adorned the old house has been scattered. The New York Historical society possesses many bits of furniture, documents and papers, which tell of the lives and doings of the dwellers in the old house who have passed away. To the society they are doubly valuable, both for their antiquity and for the fact that one of the founders of that institution was Egbert Benson, who for so many years made the home his home.

FRANCES SMITH.

The "Hobo" Club.

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 27.—"What is a 'Hobo'?" I asked this question the other day of a reporter for a daily paper up on Puget sound. I had just read in the local columns of the paper about a cityman having taken upon himself to score the city authorities of the place for what he called the inhuman treatment of a poor Hobo. I supposed a "Hobo" was perhaps the last remnant of some depleted tribe of Indians, or perchance it was some species of dumb brute which was being abused. In reply to my question the reporter said, "A Hobo is a tough." He then explained that not very long ago a club was organized in one of the cities of California whose object was to promote the pleasure of its members, and the name of the club was "The Hobo club."

The Hobos might have lived long and prospered without attracting more than local notice to their odd name, but they did neither. They soon disbanded, but left their name as a heritage to a disreputable class of people, and the word, like many others of local or accidental origin, is destined to take its place in the vocabulary of the English speaking people. It is now, it seems, thoroughly naturalized throughout the Pacific slope. The Hobo club went to a neighboring town on a Sunday excursion. The members included somewhat too freely and became hilariously noisy. The town marshal called an impromptu meeting of the club at the town jail, and with his club secured a full attendance of all the members of the Hobos. This meeting was reported rather fully in the press dispatches, and so much attention attracted to the membership that the boys paid their fines, sobered up, went home, and disbanded as a corporate body. But the name stuck, and has been adopted on the coast to signify a drunkard and tough character generally.

B. G. W.

Working for Four-Cents a Day.

It is astonishing on how little one may live in some quarters of the globe, and yet not know what. An East Indian, 40 years old, being examined recently before a magistrate at Bangalore, stated that he earned daily a quarter of an anna—between three and four cents—by bottling ginger beer, and that he was quite satisfied with his wages and position.

The swift is said to be the fastest bird that flies. A recent estimate credits it with a speed of 200 miles per hour.

When baby was sick, we gave her Castoria.
When she was a child, she cried for Castoria.
When she became a woman, she clung to Castoria.
When she had children, she gave them Castoria.

WAYNE AT STONY POINT.

BRILLIANT SUCCESS OF GEN. WASHINGTON'S BOLD PLAN.

Storming the British Fortress at Night—A Wonderful March—Keen Strategist to Outwit the Outer Sentinels—Daylight Finds Wayne in Possession.

[Copyright by American Press Association.]

HE military genius and daring of Washington as displayed in the evolution of his plan to storm the British fortress at Stony Point, New York, in the darkest hours, his exalted patriotism and his firm and courageous bearing in the field and in council.

Nevertheless there were campaigns and battles that showed the highest capacity, and suggest that with ample resources and a chance to force the fighting, Washington might have won all mankind over to the view expressed by Frederick the Great, who called him the "greatest general in the world." One such affair was the capture of Stony Point, on the Hudson, the night of July 15, 1779.

The year was one of great trial for the patriots. Provoost was ravaging South Carolina with his Indians and Tory allies; Mowbray was raiding southeast Virginia, laying waste to whole counties, and Governor Tryon, of New York and Connecticut, leisurely rocked in an easy chair while the towns of the revolutionists melted away before the British torch. Washington's army lay at the Highlands, weak in numbers and hampered by the rains at the seat of government, and only able to keep up communications with distant sections, without attempting grand campaigns. In order to divide the patriots Sir Henry Clinton moved up the Hudson, and seized and fortified Stony Point as a base for his operations.

The bay at this point was a famous place for shad fishing, and after dinner the host with his guests walked over to the shore, where they watched the fishers for a time.

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the night, the one used by the negro, "The fort's our own."

In the first stroke the Americans were warned against attacking their own men—for it was pitch dark—by pieces of white cloth sewed in their hats or badges. The garrison surrendered, and not a life was taken after quarter was asked. Such clemency was not always accorded by the British when places were stormed, especially by the foreign mercenaries of that army. Several British vessels lying in the harbor were not included in the surrender, but on the alarm of attack quietly slipped their cables and drifted down the river. Daylight found the Americans in full possession, and the commander-in-chief was apprised of the success of his mastery and daring plan by a note from Wayne, which read:

Stony Point 15th July 1779.
I object at the time of the capture of Stony Point, Col. Johnston is ours. Our officers and men behaved like men who are determined to be free. Yours most sincerely,
ANTHONY WAYNE.

ENOCH MORGAN'S SONS CO., NEW YORK.

SCIENTIFIC SQUIBS.

At Monticelli batteries of artillery using smokeless powder kept up a fire for half an hour without their position being discovered.

A compound propeller blade, consisting of a sheathing of bronze and delta metal cast on a steel core, has recently been patented in England.

An English inventor offers a system by which coal gas compressed to one-eighth its natural bulk can be carried about and utilized as an illuminant when desired.

Printing can be copied on any paper of an absorbent nature by moistening the surface of the letter with a weak solution of acetate of iron, and using an ordinary copying press.

The balloons proposed for polar exploration are 99 feet in diameter and 500,000 cubic feet in volume. The journey is to be begun from Spitzbergen, and with a favorable wind is expected to last four or five days.

A remedy for cholera has been discovered by Frenchman from Cotte. People either attacked by or in fear of the disease must sit for some hours in a garment soaked in paraffin, which irritates the skin, producing a healthy reaction, and kills the cholera microbe.

In a discussion that has lately been carried on in Europe as to the distance at which large objects on the earth's surface are visible, it was stated that the Himalaya mountains have appeared to view from the great distance of 224 miles and Mont Blanc 210 miles.

The sanitary aspects of electric lighting were discussed before the English sanitary congress, and it appears that the electric light is better than all other sources of illumination, because it is not dependent upon the exhaustion of hydrogen, resulting in the vitiation of the air.

The telephone has played an important part in the maneuvers of the Swedish fleet. There is a telephone post on board each vessel, and when lying at anchor they can telephone to one another by means of insulated conductors, which are run down the anchor chains and submerged.

It has been computed, as an illustration of the great cheapening of ocean freights which has taken place in recent years, that half a sheet of note paper will develop sufficient power, when burned in connection with the triple expansion engine, to carry a ton a mile in an Atlantic steamer.

RAILWAY BREVITIES.

It is estimated that 10,000 miles of new track will be laid in this country in 1890.

The roads in the Transmissouri association have decided not to remove their headquarters from Kansas City to Chicago.

On week days 225 trains arrive and 225 depart from the Broad Street station of the Pennsylvania railroad in Philadelphia.

A party of railroad engineers from France have been touring America to get "pointers" on the method of operating railroads.

The New York Central express freight train two years to have its entire equipment fitted with automatic couplers and air brakes.

The rate of mortality in England for the year 1888 was one passenger killed in 6,942, 836 and one passenger injured for every 220,034 carried.

Snow was being shoveled out of the Alpine tunnel in August on the Union Pacific, for the purpose of getting out about fifty cars that were snowed in during the winter of 1889-90.

The Oregon Improvement company's railroad—the Olympia and Tenino—has been made standard gauge and opened for traffic. The company has some 800 men engaged in construction work.

An official of the Pennsylvania company states that 75 per cent. of the wrecks of freight trains on that system are the results of overloading cars. It seems impossible to prevent shippers overloading cars at points where there are no scales.

The Southern Pacific system has accepted the tender of a subsidy of \$15,000,000 and the right of way to complete a coast line of railway between Santa Margarita and Ellwood, Cal., thus making a continuous line from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

A locomotive notable for its high degree of ornamentation has just been placed on the Geneva and Sayre branch of the Lehigh Valley railroad. The engine's cab is constructed in Queen Anne style, with stained glass windows. The cozy interior is decorated with French clocks and steel engravings. The metal work is nickel plated.

WEALTHY WOMEN.

Mrs. Robert Goslet and Mrs. Jaye pay taxes on \$5,000,000 apiece.

Mrs. John Jacob Astor's wealth foots up the sum total of \$5,000,000.

Mrs. Edwin Stevens enjoys the income which accrues to her from her fortune of \$15,000,000.

Mrs. John C. Green has a fortune of \$10,000,000, as has also Mrs. Cyrus H. McCormack, of Chicago.

Mrs. John Ray Barton, of Philadelphia, is possessed of a fortune which is slightly in excess of \$7,000,000.

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Lily died of jealousy at the success of St. Gregory Kneller.

Elephantine died of a broken heart over the result of the battle of Flodden.

Cheke, the great English scholar, died of grief at having been perverted from his religious belief.

Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

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